Moss Hits News Study By Pentagon

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A leading congressional advocate of freedom of information has asked the Pentagon to abandon a project studying public reaction to withholding of information and controlled news release.

In a letter to Deputy Secretary of Defense Cyrus R. Vance released yesterday, Rep. John E. Moss, (D-Calif.) said he read "with considerable disquiet" about a $69,400 grant for the study.

Moss is Chairman of the House Government Information and Foreign Operations Subcommittee.

The two-year study to be directed by Timothy C. Brook, associate professor psychology at Ohio State University, is designed to learn how people react when they do—or or do not—get to see military secrets and classified data.

The Pentagon has denied it is oriented to public information programs and the mass media.

"I had a strong reaction that research of this type under sponsorship of the government is totally inappropriate to our free society and contrary to our institutions," Moss said.

He said, "It has the gravest of implications that we might be seeking the means to manage information and influence the populace in order to achieve support for the aims of government."

"Even a slight implication of this," Moss said, "in my judgment demands immediate suspension of the grant and abandonment of the project."